

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM**

NR Eligible: yes ☐  
no ☒

Property Name: Catholic High School of Baltimore Inventory Number: B-5131  
Address: 2800 Edison Highway Historic district: ☐ yes ☒ no  
City: Baltimore Zip Code: 21213 County: Baltimore City  
USGS Quadrangle(s): Baltimore East  
Property Owner: Catholic High School of Baltimore Tax Account ID Number: N/A  
Tax Map Parcel Number(s): N/A Tax Map Number: 8  
Project: Rehabilitation of Sinclair Lane Bridge over CSX Railroad Agency: Baltimore City Department of Transportation  
Agency Prepared By: A.D. Marble & Company  
Preparer's Name: Emma Young Date Prepared: 6/16/2006  
Documentation is presented in: \_\_\_\_\_  
Preparer's Eligibility Recommendation: ☒ Eligibility recommended ☐ Eligibility not recommended  
Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G  
*Complete if the property is a contributing or non-contributing resource to a NR district/property:*  
Name of the District/Property: \_\_\_\_\_  
Inventory Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Eligible: ☐ yes ☐ no Listed: ☐ yes ☐ no  
Site visit by MHT Staff ☐ yes ☒ no Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Property and Justification: *(Please attach map and photo)*

**Catholic High School of Baltimore**

The Catholic High School of Baltimore, located at 2800 Edison Highway in northeast Baltimore City, Maryland, is a four-story, circa-1939, brick, Classic Revival-style school situated on the west side of Edison Highway. The asymmetrical façade faces east toward the road. The school is oriented on a north-south axis, and the original rectangular footprint remains intact.

**Exterior Description**

The building consists of a four-story main block with three-story flanking hyphens and a three-and-a-half-story wing anchoring both the north and south ends. Brick, laid in common bond, covers the exterior of the building. A brick water table is present on the north, east, and west elevations, and a denticulated, brick cornice lines the roofline.

All roofs are covered with standing seam metal. The main block is sheltered by a steeply pitched, side-gabled roof with a hipped-

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MHT Comments:

Andrew Lewis  
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

John E. Kuntze  
Reviewer, National Register Program

7/24/06  
Date

7/25/06  
Date

roof extension on the rear. A central chimney is visible on the western slope of the roof. A low-pitched, side-gabled roof caps the northern hyphen, while a low-pitched, deck roof caps the southern hyphen. A steeply pitched, front-gabled roof, sheathed in standing seam metal, caps each of the two anchor blocks. Another interior, brick chimney is located on the south side of the north anchor.

The main entrance is located in the center three bays of the east elevation of the thirteen-bay main block. A three-story portico with four, fluted, concrete, Greek Doric columns surrounds the entry. The simple entablature consists of a low-relief cornice line with a row of fluting located below. Rounded concrete knobs with a palm motif adorn the corners, and a cross stands in the center. "The Catholic High School of Baltimore" is carved into the frieze. The three entrances consist of double-leaf, pane-and-panel, metal doors. A decorative relief with an etching of a decorative band of scrolls tops each door. The two-story windows above each entrance are covered with concrete openwork in an Art Deco pattern. The fourth story, which rises above the portico, consist of two, six-over-six light, awning-sash windows, with the concrete cross standing in the center bay between the windows.

The upper three stories of the east elevation of the main block contain five bays to both the north and south sides of the main entrance. The first story consists of three, evenly spaced, six-over-six light, double-hung sash windows located to each side of the main entrance. The remaining bays are comprised of six-over-nine light, awning-sash windows. A brick lintel caps each window, and each sits upon a brick sill.

The fifteen-bay, three-story hyphen on the north side of the main block has a low-pitched, side-gabled roof, sheathed in standing seam metal. The hyphen contains a similar window pattern as that of the main block. The first floor contains six-over-six light, double-hung sash, metal windows, while the upper two stories consists of six-over-nine light, awning-sash windows. Each window is framed by a brick sill and brick lintel.

The southern hyphen consists of three stories and four bays. The first floor consists of six-over-six light, double-hung sash, metal windows. The second and third floors are comprised of six-over-nine light, awning-sash windows. Each window sits upon a brick sill and is capped by a brick lintel.

A three-story, four-bay, side-gabled wing, recessed approximately two bays back from the front of the main block, connects the south elevation of the south hyphen to the north elevation of the south anchor block. The first and second floors contain two-over-eight light, awning-sash windows, framed by brick lintels and brick sills. The third story consists of fifteen-light metal windows capped by a fanlight. The third story windows are capped by a brick lintel with a concrete keystone.

The southern anchor is three-and-a-half-stories high and five bays wide. The first floor contains three, evenly spaced entrances, each recessed into two-story concrete arches with keystones. Four, poured-concrete steps lead to the entrance, and each entrance consists of paired, pane-and-panel, metal doors. Multi-light windows are located in each arch above the doorway. "Auditorium" is engraved into a concrete panel located above the central doorway. The third story is lit with six-over-six-light, double-hung sash, wood windows in each of the five bays. The gable end contains a concrete panel carved into a Greek cross motif.

Numerous one- to two-story additions project from the rear (west) side of the school building. A large, brick, three-story, front-gabled, circa-1985 addition is attached to the west (rear) elevation of the south (auditorium) anchor. A brick, one-story, flat-roof, circa-1995, L-shaped addition is located on the south and west elevations of the large, three-story addition. A poured concrete sidewalk leads from the east side of the building to a secondary entrance that is situated in the center bay of the east elevation of the one-story addition. The secondary entrance is located in a recessed concrete entranceway. The entry is comprised of a single-leaf, metal, pane-and-panel door.

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The west (rear) elevation of the school building consists of numerous, one- to two-story, brick additions that appear to have been erected between 1960 and 1995.

#### Interior Description

The interior of the school was not accessible during the site visit.

#### Surrounding Landscape

Edison Highway lines the property to the east and Sinclair Lane lines the property to the south. Elmley Avenue serves as the northern boundary. A paved asphalt parking lot is situated to the rear (west) of the building and leads to Longview Avenue, which serves as the western boundary of the parcel. A grass lawn, lined with evergreen and deciduous trees, surrounds the building to the east and north.

#### History

Although stock plans could have been used, research efforts did not uncover this information, nor did research efforts reveal the architect/builder of the school building.

#### Catholic Schools in the United States

Throughout the United States, the middle of the nineteenth century saw increasing Catholic interest in education in tandem with increasing Catholic immigration. To serve their growing communities, American Catholics first tried to reform American public schools to rid them of what they believed to be fundamentalist Protestant overtones. Failing, Catholics began operating their own schools, ably aided by such religious orders as the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Francis. By 1900, the Catholic school system was thriving with remarkable vigor. In 1904, Catholic educators formed a new organization, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

In 1900, an estimated 3,500 parochial schools existed in the United States. Within 20 years, the number of elementary schools had reached 6,551 and secondary schools had reached 100. Two decades later, Catholic high schools numbered 1,500. By the mid-1960s, enrollment had reached an all-time high of 4.5 million elementary school pupils and approximately 1 million students in Catholic high schools. By 2005, elementary and secondary enrollment had dropped to a nationwide total of 2.6 million students (National Catholic Education Association 2006).

#### School Reform in Baltimore City

Prior to the area's 1918 annexation into the city of Baltimore, what is now the northeast area of the city was largely rural. During the period from 1870 until 1930, the population of the city of Baltimore boomed. As a result, Baltimore's public services, including education, were unable to keep pace with the increased demands of the growing population. In 1921, the city commissioned the Strayer School Survey, which revealed the ineptitude of Baltimore's education system, including overcrowding, poor sanitation, and safety concerns. As a result, in the 1930s, the city passed three large publicly supported school loans totaling \$32 million. Fifteen new public schools were built; operating and salary budgets increased; and new schools emphasized the philosophy of health and productivity through their larger and more spacious designs (Olson 1997: 306).

However, because child labor laws and public school reform throughout Baltimore, school populations increased faster than the

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total population. As a result, despite the construction of 15 new school buildings plus substantial additions and repairs, Baltimore schools could not avoid the overcrowding, safety, and funding concerns of the previous decades. Therefore, private and parochial schools soon warranted further investigation as parents turned away from the overcrowded public schools to the less-crowded, accommodating, private schools of the city.

Between 1921 and 1939, Archbishop Michael Curley (Archbishop of Baltimore from 1921-1947) raised \$30 million for parochial schools throughout Baltimore City. In 1922, he organized the Office of Education and devoted himself to the work of consolidation, centralization, and the implementation of Vatican directives. Parochial grade school enrollments rose from 32,000 to 54,000 and high school enrollment increased fivefold. Catholics were represented on the public school board, and there was a tacit understanding that the two systems would not undercut each other (Olson 1997: 307-308). Father Curley's reputation as a fierce administrator rested in part to his building program that he adopted in Baltimore, particularly the establishment of the new parochial schools.

#### Catholic High School of Baltimore

With the permission and support of Archbishop Michael J. Curley and through the efforts of Mother Mary Generosa McCafferty, Provincial Superior of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, a new school was erected ca. 1939 at 2800 Edison Highway, Baltimore City. The school was erected to serve as a comprehensive high school for young women (similar to that of the private, all-girls high school, Institute of Notre Dame, established in the early nineteenth century and also located in northeast Baltimore City). The name of the institution as presented to the Archbishop read: "The Curley High School of Baltimore." Not wishing the school be named after himself, Archbishop Curley renamed the school "Catholic High School of Baltimore," the name which the property still retains today. (In 1960, under the leadership of Bishop Francis P. Keogh, Archbishop Curley High School, an all-boys high school, was founded and named after Archbishop Curley. This school property occupies 33 acres in northeast Baltimore City).

Classes began on September 6, 1939, with a student body of 254 freshmen. The Catholic High School of Baltimore graduated its first class in 1943 and has since remained under the sponsorship of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.

The Catholic High School of Baltimore continues to enroll young women in grades 9-12. As a private Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the school is approved by the Maryland State Department of Education, is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and is a member of the National Catholic Education Association and the Association of Independent Maryland Schools.

#### Statement of Significance:

The Catholic High School of Baltimore, located at 2800 Edison Highway, stands as a physical attestation of the Baltimore parochial school reforms of the 1930s.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns or our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or

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that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or  
D. that have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

The Catholic High School of Baltimore is eligible for the National Register Historic Places under Criterion A as a locally significant example of the 1930s building campaign of parochial schools throughout the city of Baltimore. The building stands as a physical attestation to the local educational campaigns of Archdiocese of Baltimore, specifically Archbishop Michael Curley, during the 1930s era of public and parochial educational reform. The property also meets National Register Criterion Consideration A as a property owned by a religious institution eligible for its historic significance to the theme of education.

Although the property can be linked to the building campaigns of Archbishop Michael Curley, the property is not eligible under Criterion B as the building is not the best representative of Archbishop Curley's productive life. The Catholic High School of Baltimore was not the first nor the last educational building supported by Archbishop Curley, who can be attributed to numerous parochial school buildings throughout Baltimore from 1921-1947.

The Catholic High School of Baltimore lacks the architectural distinctiveness necessary to qualify it for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The building does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a period or method of construction. The building does not represent the work of a master nor does it possess high artistic value. Therefore, the building is not eligible under Criterion C.

The property was not evaluated under Criterion D as part of the current investigation.

#### References

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Catholic High School of Baltimore

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# Catholic High School of Baltimore B-5131

## 2800 Edison Highway

Rehabilitation of Sinclair Lane Bridge over CSX Railroad Tracks

City of Baltimore, Maryland



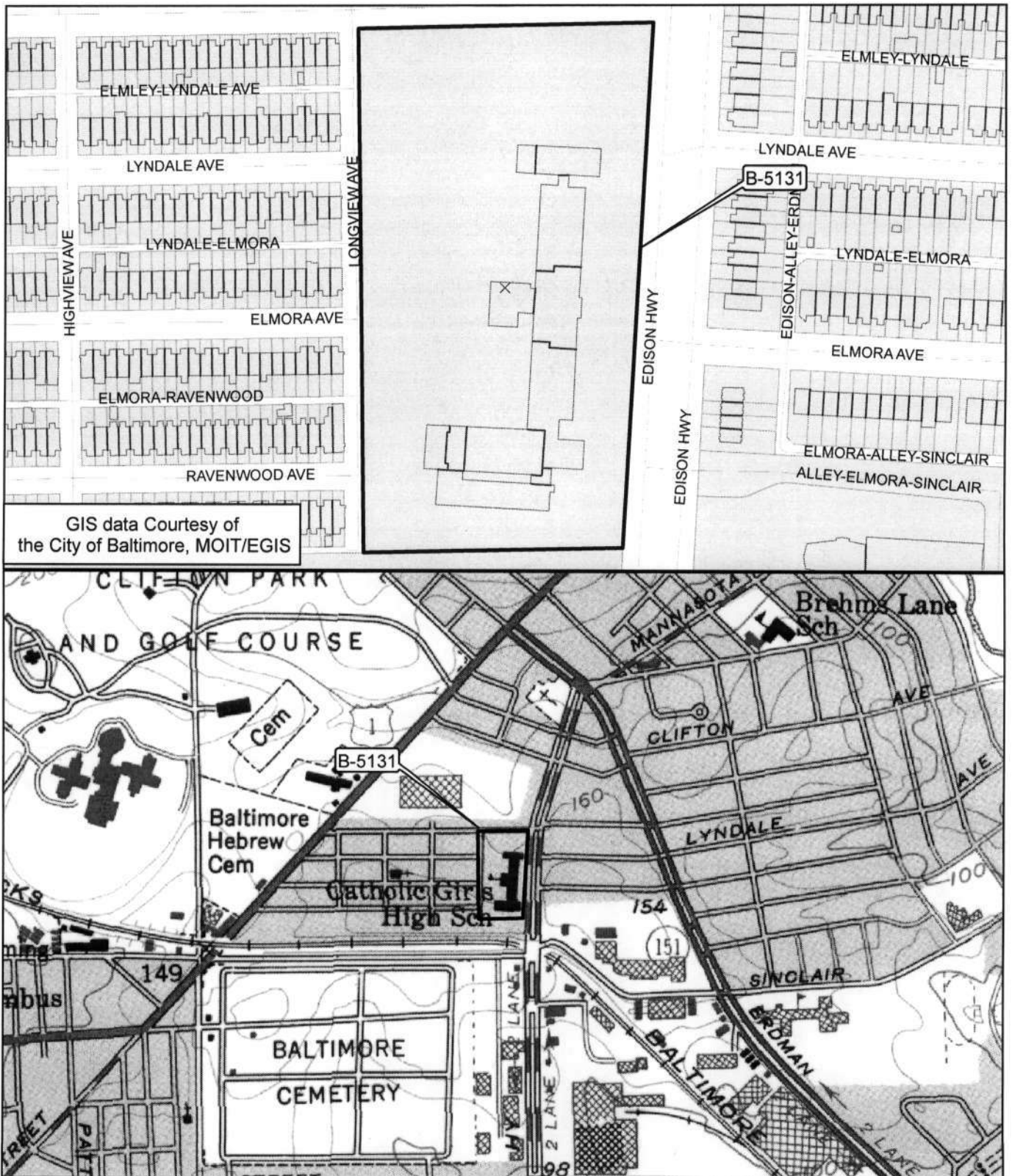
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Resource Location

Sources: USGS 7.5' Topographic Quadrangle (Baltimore East, MD); ESRI

B-5131  
Catholic High School of Baltimore  
2800 Edison Highway  
Block 4178L, Lot 001  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad.





THE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
OF BALTIMORE

EDISON HWY.



B-5131

Catholic High School of Baltimore  
Baltimore City, Maryland

E. Young

05.2006

MD SHPO

Main entrance (east elevation); view to west

# 1 of 6



B-5131

Catholic High School of Baltimore  
Baltimore City, Maryland

E. Young

05.2006

MD SHPD

Main block (east elevation); view to northwest

# 2 of 6



EDISON HWY.



B-5131

Catholic High School of Baltimore  
Baltimore City, Maryland

E. Young

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MD SHPO

east elevation of north wing; view to Northwest

#3 of 6



B-5131

Catholic High School of Baltimore

Baltimore City, Maryland

E. Young

05.2006

MD SHPO

east elevation of north anchor; view to northwest

#4 of 6





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Catholic High School of Baltimore  
Baltimore City, Maryland

E. Young

05.2006

MD SHPO

east elevation of south wing & south anchor; view to southwest

#5 of 6



B-5131

Catholic High School of Baltimore

Baltimore City, Maryland

E. Young

05.2006

MD SHPO

east elevation of south anchor (Auditorium); view to southwest

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